



**Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Bureau of Construction Codes
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Bureau of Construction Codes Technical Bulletin

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Plan Submission Requirements for Mechanical Permits

“Providing for Michigan’s Safety in the Built Environment”

Technical bulletins are issued to provide clarification on issues which arise regarding code administration and enforcement. The information provided in the bulletin is developed to promote uniform interpretation and enforcement of the state codes.

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PLAN SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR MECHANICAL PERMITS

Issue

When are plans required for mechanical permits for one- and two-family dwellings?

Code and Law

Michigan Mechanical Code

Section 106.3.1 of the Michigan Mechanical Code provides, in part:

“The code official shall require construction documents, computations and specifications to be prepared and designed by a registered design professional when required by state law. Construction documents shall be drawn to scale and shall be of sufficient clarity to indicate the location, nature and extent of the work proposed and show in detail that the work conforms to the provisions of this code.”

An exception to this provision provides:

“The code official shall have the authority to waive the submission of construction documents, calculations or other data if the nature of the work applied for is such that reviewing of the construction documents is not necessary to determine compliance with this code.”

As defined in Section 202 of the Mechanical Code construction documents include:

“All of the written, graphic and pictorial documents prepared or assembled for describing the design, location and physical characteristics of the elements of the project necessary for obtaining a building permit. The construction drawings shall be drawn to an appropriate scale.”

Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act, 1972 PA 230

Section 10(1) of the Act provides, in part:

“Except as otherwise provided in the code...contain a detailed statement in writing, verified by affidavit of the person making it, of the specifications for the building or structure, and full and complete copies of the plans drawn to scale of the proposed work.”

Discussion

The Bureau of Construction Codes has established, based on the requirements of section 106.3.1 of the Code and the State Construction Code Act, a threshold for one- and two-family dwellings at 3,500 square feet in area. This threshold has been in place for several years.

Recent discussions held on this matter have determined the use of a floor area for establishing requirements for plans did not take into full account the properties of the design and complexity of the HVAC system to properly heat and cool buildings or structures. A more appropriate measurement of the system is found in the building design, as it plays a significant role in the size and complexity of the heating system.

Conclusion

As a result of these discussions, the threshold for submission of construction documents based on the heating input rating in terms of Btu's is found to be a more accurate measurement tool for determining the need for construction documents.

Code officials will still have the ability to require construction documents in unusual designs and where questions arise as a result of a system design beyond conventional system parameters.

Permit applications used by the Bureau will reflect this modification as follows:

Construction documents are not required for the following:

1. One- and two-family dwellings when the heating/cooling input rating is 375,000 Btu's or less.
2. Alterations and repair work determined by the mechanical official to be of a minor nature.
3. Business, Mercantile, and Storage buildings having HVAC equipment only, with one fire area and not more than 3,500 square feet.
4. Work completed by a governmental subdivision or state agency costing less than \$15,000.

Permit applications will require applicants to indicate the input rating of the heating equipment. At the time of inspection, inspectors will be able to verify the input rating listed on the application.

Questions concerning the submission of construction documents to the Bureau of Construction Codes may be directed to the Mechanical Division at (517) 241-9325 or the Plan Review Division at (517) 241-9328.